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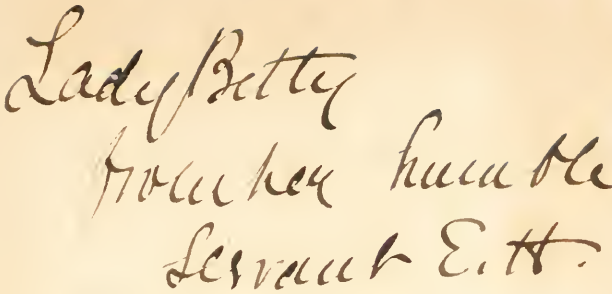

Lady Betty
Fourher humble
Servant E. H.

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Verse-Tales, Lyrics, and Translations,

BY

Emily H. Hickey.

AUTHOR OF

"A SCULPTOR AND OTHER POEMS." EDITOR OF BROWNING'S "STRAFFORD"

"Build humbly a high music from within
With pain and pleasure, righteousness and sin."
HON. RODEN NOEL, "*A Modern Faust.*"

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET, W

1889.

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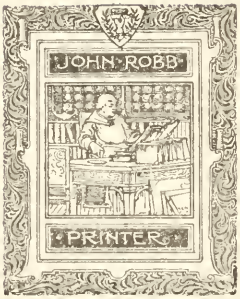
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
"For Richer for Poorer"	1
Father Damien of Molokai	2
A Ballad of the Great Armada	7
Margery Daw	13
A Sea Story	18
As of Old	20
Creeping Jenny	21
A Gift	25
"And now Abideth . . . . Hope"	26
Conversion I.	32
Conversion II.	33
Furze-Blossom	34
Motherless	36
Katey	39
"In Shadow One, and One in Light"	43
Christophera	46
To a Master in Paradise I.	50
To a Master in Paradise II.	51
"Emperor Evermore"	52
While the Grass Grows	53
To one who rejoices	57
In the Morning Light	58
Two souls needed each other	59

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

The Ecce Homo of Monte Pincio 60
The Vision of Saint Teresa 63
To a Poet 64
Said the Tomb unto the Rose 65
Expectans Expectavi 66
Fairy Givings 68
Church-Mice 70
Folk-song, from the Old French 73
The Stream from the Sea Divided 75
To One Stricken and Smitten 76
Ave, Lux 78
To the Honourable Roden Noel 79
Oh, the Glory of the Morning 82
A Winsome Lady, blithe and fair 83
Why, if all Poets Crown their Loves with Verse . . 84
From One to Another 85
A Disciple 87
What have I to do with Thee? 90
Per Te ad Lucem 92
At the New Year 94
To the Lord Christ 96

Translations from the First English :—

The Battle of Maldon 101
From the Epic Fragment, Judith 112
The Dream of the Holy Rood 117

"FOR RICHER, FOR POORER."

" H, give us of your oil, our lamps go out;
Your well-fed lamps are clear and bright to see;
And, if we go to buy us oil, maybe,
Far off our ears shall hear the jubilant shout,
'Behold the Bridegroom cometh, zoned about
With utter light and utter harmony.'
Then leave us not to weep continually
In darkness, for our souls' hunger and drought."

Then turned one virgin of the virgins wise
To one among the foolish, with a low
Sweet cry, and looked her, lovelike, in the eyes,
Saying, "My oil is thine; for weal, for woe,
We two are one, and where thou goest I go,
One lot being ours for aye, where'er it lies."

FATHER DAMIEN OF MOLOKAI.

AND so they have told you, lad, that only the folk of old
Were cast by the Maker of men in the grand heroic mould:
That all we care for now is to grope and moil to get
The treasure the rust consumes and the secret moth doth fret:
That now we look to the ground, as then they looked to the sky—
By all that is holy and true, it's a lie, boy, just a lie.
Full many a tongue can tell how surely now as then
There is noble witness borne to the life of God in men:
There are with us not a few of the good old hero breed,
So true and strong and staunch for the doing of many a deed
Of glory, and honour, and might, and beauty—Oh, deeds the which
Make this old world so great and the souls of men so rich,
No less than the deeds of yore-we speak of through all the years,
Which stir us with passionate longing, and move us to holiest tears.

In the life we are set to live, three things, lad, have their share;
To man it is given of God to see, and to do, and to bear.
There be some with the keener eye, the sharper sense to bring
Anear to that secret of God which lieth in everything;

There be some with the swifter foot, the shoulder of mightier might,
The heart of the even beat alike in the race or the fight:
There be some of whom, low-voiced, we speak with reverence due,
For theirs is a harder thing than even to see or to do.

There is various work in life, lad, and all that work is good;
To see, and to do, and to bear; and well be it understood
The one same spirit is there, if many a form there be;
For the Master-Worker He gives to one of us, verily,
A little thing—a rose in a garden to water—and one
Must carry the wood and the fire to offer an only son.

The joyful praise of a heart that is warm in purple fair;
"Thy will be done" from a heart that is lying bruised and bare;
The shout on the mountain's top of the climber nought can tire,
And the sob at the mountain's foot of the weakling's vain desire.

What is the gallantest deed? You answer, *The facing of Death.*
And so you are surely right; you know how the Christ He saith,
No love is greater than this, that a man lay down his life—
But how shall he lay it down? In the heart of the hottest strife,
As he grapples with desperate strain in the deadly battle-breach,
Where foeman with foeman is matched, strong-sinewed each and each?
Oh sweet and comely it is for the fatherland to die!
But sweeter and comelier yet—I will tell you by-and-by.

That a man lay down his life, no greater love than this!
Just think of the joy of life, its glory, and might, and bliss;
Delight of the perfect limb, delight of the busy brain—
And life is dear full oft, though girt with a girdle of pain;
One hopes, hopes on to the end, or is half content at least
To eat of the falling crumbs, while others may share the feast.

To die on the burning ship that another may gain the boat;
To sink in the bridgeless deep that a raft may safely float;
To prop the falling arch, if but for a minute's space;
To look on the fever-fiend, and even smile in his face;
Such things are common enough, and yet, men dare to say
The olden spirit has gone, and the glory has past away;
We are selfish, hard, and cold! Oh, many, seeming such,
Have sprung to the stature of men when they only felt the touch,
The needed touch on the quick that goaded and guided too;
And they waited not to think, but they sprang to dare and do.

But I know not when we felt the hearts of us deeplier thrilled,
I know not when our souls with an awfuller joy were filled,
Than when we heard of his deed who, years back, went his way
Down into the Valley of Death, and walks in its shade to-day.

A man in the strength of his life, the strength of body and brain,
With the hope of the eager-souled of much to do and gain,
With learning and culture and grace to light the way he trod,
Just turned his back upon all, for the lepers' drear abode.

Under a far-off sky, where endless summer doth smile,
Girt with a girdle of hills there lieth a calm blue isle;
And only to see it from far you would think how happy and fair
The days of the women and men who dwell with the sunshine there:
But, all apart and alone, girt in by the sea and the chain
Of huge, precipitous hills, that isle hath a strange wide plain,
And the exiled are all it knows, and over the ocean foam
No vessel ever will ride to carry those exiles home.

For never a home have they, poor smitten and stricken lives,
These parentless children, these childless parents, these husbandless wives,
These wifeless husbands, these lads and girls whose life's young day
Shall know no joy of the sun, but pass under clouds away.

Stricken and smitten indeed, by the deadliest curse and ban
That ever has come to torture the wretched body of man;
The dread, mysterious thing, that creepeth remorseless on,
To bring such vile decay to skin and flesh and bone.

They tell of the lepers cleansed by the Christ-touch long ago;
But not for such as these the healing hand to know;
Only to linger on, till one fail to recognise
That a human soul can dwell in such a horrible guise.

Think, lad, of living one's life, one's life, with such as these;
To leave all bright and fair for horror and foul disease,
For the sick that none can cure, the sore that none can aid—
Do you think the stoutest heart could face it undismayed?

And more—to know full well its like will come to pass,
One's own clean body and sound shall be this hideous mass,
This loathsome, shuddering heap one fain would put away
In the breast of the kindly earth, to hide from the eye of day.

He heard the call nor stayed—"*My Master, here am I!*"
His work was there, and he went to do his work and die:
Hope to the hopeless he bore, and the comfort that comforteth
To the hearts of the men who lay in the vale of the shade of death.

He has loved and worked for the lepers, it's now the fourteenth year,
And the stroke has fallen at last, and the end it draweth near:
He will love and work to the end as surely the martyrs can,
Who follow the bleeding feet of the martyr Son of Man,
With souls whose ardour of love doth flame and burn and glow,
As red as the ruby's heart, and as pure as the Alpine snow.

How shall we love thee and bless, with love and blessings meet?
Suffer us, brother and saint, to kneel in kissing thy feet;
The feet that shall fathom and scale, or ever their rest be won,
The dread abysses of Love, and its heights which know the sun.

A BALLAD OF THE GREAT ARMADA.

THREE hundred years ago! three hundred years ago!
The Spaniard sailed the seas to work us ill and woe;
Three hundred years ago we fought the fleet of fame
That sailed from Tagus mouth to do us hurt and shame
We fought them unfeared three hundred years ago—
And Thou, O Lord, didst loose Thy winds and bid them blow:
Shattered and torn was Spain; O Giver of Victory,
Because of Thy great Salvation we lift our hearts to Thee.

There were thirty thousand men that sailed that year from Spain;
There were twenty thousand men that never went home again;
And of those who breathed once more beneath their native sky,
There was many and many a one who only came to die.

The flower of Spain was there, the strong, the young, the brave,
Her glory and boast—so soon to lie beneath the wave:
And some of our kin were among them, who broke in God's own name
Their faith to their land and Queen, and sought to do us shame.

The peasants who cared no whit to fight or win, they took
By force from their wives and homes, and the plow and the pruning hook,
And kept them in guarded gangs lest any the host forsook.
And many a slave was among them—Jew, Algerine, and Turk,
To row the galleys along—ill doom and ill the work.

But never a man with us, except whose heart beat high
To guard his fatherland and, if so were need, to die.
Quoth a Spaniard, "This English folk is free, and hath aye been free,
And the freedom-owning folk, it doeth courageously."

Or ever they sighted our coast a taste of their bitter chance
Befell them when galleys four they lost on the coast of France;
But on and on they came, and gallantly rode the sea,
And at dawn on a morn of July the Lizard was under their lee.
Up flashed the beacons to tell the news throughout the land,
And village and town were alert, and ready in heart and hand:
'Twas the twentieth day of July in the early afternoon
We saw the enemy's fleet, in shape like a crescent moon.

It was well to see the foe we had skirmished with so long
It seemed there would be no end to the bitter wrath and wrong.
Now grapple, might and main, let petty conflicts cease,
Unfurl the standard of war, nor fight 'neath the flag of peace!

Eight years was the land a-preparing before her trial-day,
And Hawkins had dressed her fleet that floated in Plymouth Bay,
"In royal and perfect estate;" the ships ne'er felt the sea,
For Hawkins had done the work, and done it perfectly.
Oh, never a parted rope, and never a spar with a sprain,
Good brain and hand were his, and ours were that hand and brain.

All praise to the daring heart, to the gallant arm of might,
To the quenchless fire of zeal that burns through the desperate fight;
And praise to the wisdom fair, the patience long and true,
That waiteth unchanged and strong till the time be ripe to do—
Charles Howard of Effingham, hail! We greet them both in you.

We name not name by name in the bead-roll long to tell
Of the gallant ones and great whom England loveth well,
Of those who nobly fought, and those who nobly fell.
O men who fought that fight, and fought it gallantly,
It was good to be English then, and best to be West Country!

All through a long forenoon the little English ships
Came hovering round the Spaniard—each one, as a bird that dips
A moment, then flies away and leaves no trace behind—
Dashed close to the galleons huge, and shot off in the eye of the wind.

All through that long forenoon the foe essayed to close,
Full fain "in the fashion of such as will sell their lives with blows."
Down came the even-dusk, up rushed the rolling brine,
And Valdez' *Captain* fouled the good *Saint Catherine:*
And at morn, when Drake came up, she struck her flag, indeed,
And her powder loaded our guns, and her reals helped our need.

Oh, the Spaniard fought and fought, but how could the day be won
In the teeth of our mad little ships, and the wind going round with the sun?
Then the one-week summer went, and all the wild winds' host
Leapt loose from the hand of the Lord to guard the English coast.

O God of freedom, we bless Thee, for Thou didst make us free;
O God of battles, Thou gavest our hands the victory;
O God of might, we kneel at Thy feet, and, kneeling, say,
To Thee be the glory and praise, Non nobis, Domine!

It is better to fight than to win; it is better to strive than to gain;
It is better to do the right than to save from death or chain;
But we fought and we won that day, and we conquered bonds and Spain.

We harassed them flank and van with those swift little ships of ours,
Darting like birds in and out, among their moving towers;
And at last we drove them out of the Channel in the night,
For we sent our fire ships down, a scare of flame and light;
And they set their faces to flee right up through the Narrow Seas—
Quoth Drake, "By the help of God, we will wrestle a pull with these."
And northward they fled and fled, before the southerly wind,
With English Howard and Drake, and their ninety sail behind.

They dared not face the terrible English ships again,
And they sailed away and away, by the north and the west for Spain;
And the wild wind shrieked in triumph to work the Spaniard woe,
And the dreadful North Sea waters wrought ravage upon the foe.

They struck on the Irish coast, where the rock-wall rises sheer;
And Burke, "the Devil's hook," he robbed and slew them there;
And some were caught and bound, and led through the strange country,
To die the death of shame upon the gallows-tree.
The *Rata*—that goodly ship, with the bud and promise of Spain—
"Where is the *Rata?*" ye ask. Look over the seething main.
"Where is Alonzo da Leyva?" Alas! thine eyes, Castille,
Must weep their bitterest tears; thy sons, the young and leal,
The flower of thy proudest blood, the best of thy faith and boast,
Lie low with Alonzo de Leyva upon the Irish coast,
Where twice they were wrecked and saved, and thrice they were wrecked and lost.

And the trouble was o'er, and the land was out of her fear at last,
And she drew her mighty breath as one whose peril is past;
And she knelt to her God and she blest Him and praised Him, her Buckler and Shield;
And she smiled on the sons of her love; and, far over wood-land and field,
The shout of her gladness went up, and the hymns of her triumph were pealed.
Oh, blithe were the hearts of her sons, and free was the hearth and her sward;
They had fought for their land and had saved her, and that was their meed and reward:
Full strong in the strength of her life-blood which beat in their every vein,
They had girt her around with their manhood, and kept her from slavedom and Spain:
They had fought for their God-given birthright, their country to have and to hold,
And not for the lust of conquest, and not for the hunger of gold.

O England, mother of might, O queen of the kingly sea,
The strong and good are thy sons, freeborn and ever free.
Lord Christ, if the hour of need come ever, as then, to her
And tumult be all around of tempest and fear and stir,
We ask no better boon than hearts to beat and glow
Like the hearts of Englishmen three hundred years ago.

MARGERY DAW.*

See-saw, Margery Daw,
Sold her bed and lay in the straw;
Wasn't she a dirty slut,
To sell her nice bed and lie in the dirt?

Old Rime.

Sell all that thou hast; and give to the poor.

Old Book.

A TINY baby girl, a-cooing on nurse's knee;
Nobody ever imagined how rich she was going to be;
Nobody thought she'd have money enough for a thousand such
As the one little maiden child, one day to possess so much.

See-saw, Margery Daw.

That pretty lissom body of hers grew all astir
To the rhythmical beat of the words that nurse was singing to her;
Up and down she went in a very rapture of glee,
Laughing and kicking and crowing, so happy a babe was she.

See-saw, Margery Daw.

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Margaret Dawson, not like a Margaret pale and rare,
She grew into girlhood with red on her cheek and gold on her hair,
And home-making light on her face, as she past in her maidhood sweet,
An English flower of delight for garden and room and street.
See-saw, Margery Daw.

So Margaret she never was called, but Margery Daw instead;
The pet of the village was she, its love was outpoured on her head:
Early an orphan, alas, but with many to play the part
Of father and mother and take the little one home to their heart,
See-saw, Margery Daw.

Full were the nests of the village of bonny brave birds of delight,
But room and to spare for the one little birdling so plump and so white;
The birdling whose chirp was so happy, the birdling that cared not a straw
For itself, and loved others so dearly, the sweet little Margery Daw.
See-saw, Margery Daw.

Well, to my story alive; at last the full season it came,
That Margery Daw, our girlie, must grow to a stately dame;
For money and goods were hers, and rich exceeding was she,
By the will of her unknown kin, who were dead beyond the sea.
See-saw, Margery Daw.

They dressed her in grand attire, and took our darling away;
She kissed us all and said, "I am coming home one day."
We smiled, to grieve her not, but our hearts were very sore,
For we thought we knew that day, we should see our child no more.

See-saw, Margery Daw.

We had many a word in our minds about the world and its cares,—
How riches deceive the heart,—of the myriad nets and snares,
That catch the souls of the rich; and we felt so dismal-sure
Our darling was lost to us, because she had ceased to be poor.

See-saw, Margery Daw.

We were very wise, you see, and yet not wise enough;
Her wholesome human heart was made of different stuff;
And when five years were come and gone, with seed and grain,
Our little Margery Daw came back to us again.

See-saw, Margery Daw.

Miss Dawson, the gold lady! Miss Dawson, the moneyed dame!
A girl with big bright eyes, and happy voice, she came!
We kissed our dear wee maid with never a touch of awe;
Margery Daw come back! our own little Margery Daw!

See-saw, Margery Daw.

Changed? was Margery changed? yes, one way changed was she;
We saw on her brow the star of lovely constancy;
We knew she had claimed and won the heritage of the years,
The grandeur of noble thought and the glory of selfless tears.

See-saw, Margery Daw.

Margery Daw come back to the dear old friends again!
Fair little Margery Daw, beset by a lengthy train
Of cousins, cater and germane, who came to save the child
From doing her purposed deed, a deed so mad and wild.
See-saw, Margery Daw.

Mad little Margery Daw! for who, in their senses, sure,
Would leave to be wealthy as she, and choose instead to be poor?
Infant in mind and soul, if woman in English law,—
Thickwitted, thinwitted, crackedwitted, nowitted Margery Daw!
See-saw, Margery Daw.

Who would have thought of this, when nurse was singing away
To the baby who standeth now, just twenty-one to-day?
Moral—let nurses never sing such ridiculous rimes;
One doesn't know what may happen these higgledy-piggledy times.
See-saw, Margery Daw.

And Margery Daw was bent on doing this foolish deed;
And it wasn't the slightest use for kinsfolk and friends to plead;
Anger and prayers alike she met with her sweet sun smile,
And obstinate Margery Daw would gang her ain gait the while.
See-saw, Margery Daw.

Such a nice bed! to sell it! nay, even to give it away!
Cosy and warm and fair; it had taken many a day
To fashion a bed like this; and a wilful girl was fain
Undo the maker's work, and waste his sweat and his pain!
See-saw, Margery Daw.

The straw, to be sure, she would lie in, was crisp and dainty and sweet,
It had borne through the happy summer the crown of beautiful wheat;
But, in some folk's minds, you see, the loveliest golden brown
Of the cleanest, sweetest straw, is dirt to a bed of down.

See-saw, Margery Daw.

Oh, riches are good to have, and riches are good to spend,
And she might have been rich, and yet to the poor a helper and friend;
For the poor with grateful hearts should take what the rich can spare;—
O mad little Margery Daw, what a foolish girl you were!

See-saw, Margery Daw.

You might have girdled your life with all the fairest and best
Of colour and perfume and form; and made a beautiful rest
In pleasant places; a palace of glory and fair delight;—
And you live with the poor by day, and lie in the straw by night.

See-saw, Margery Daw.

Yes, Margery Daw, you go in simplest clothing clad,
And your soul through your body shines, and maketh all men glad:
You tread not on velvet soft, nor feed from costly ware;—
But wherever you come straightway all things grow good and fair.

See-saw, Margery Daw.

A SEA STORY.

ILENCE. A while ago
Shrieks went up piercingly;
But now is the ship gone down;
Good ship, well manned, was she.
There's a raft that's a chance of life for one,
This day upon the sea.

A chance for one of two;
Young, strong, are he and he,
Just in the manhood prime,
The comelier, verily,
For the wrestle with wind and weather and wave,
In the life upon the sea.

One of them has a wife
And little children three;
Two that can toddle and lisp;
And a suckling on the knee;
Naked they'll go and hunger sore,
If he be lost at sea.

One has a dream of home,
A dream that well may be;
He never has breathed it yet;
She never has known it, she.
But some one will be sick at heart,
If he be lost at sea.

"Wife and kids and home!—
Wife, kids nor home has he!—
Give us a chance, Bill!" Then,
"All right, Jem!" Quietly
A man gives up his life for a man,
This day upon the sea.

"AS OF OLD."

HEN His great love, Who maketh all things new,
Shall set us, one day, at each other's side,
And bid us look, glad hearted, happy-eyed,
Into each other's face,—O Dear and True,
Will all our past have perished, joy and rue,
And we go hand in hand, beatified,
And think no more of what did here betide?—
Will it be so, my dear, for me and you?

We know not; safe within His secret breast
From questioning eyes He keeps the future rolled;
But if He will to make us fair and clean,
Nor slay us with the cleansing flame, our gold
He sure can purge until it bear His test,
And bid us keep;—for what has been has been.

CREEPING JENNY.

TWO little Jennies we are; you and I, Jenny my dear;
I wish I could see you better! I wish you were nearer me here!
I see a good lot o' your green, but your blossoms are turned to the light;
Your blossoms so many and bonny, your blossoms so yellow and bright.

Dear little Jenny, I wish I might have you by me in bed;
But you wouldn't like it at all; you'd curl up your leaves, Tom said,
And your blossoms, he told me, would droop and die away, one by one,
For the light isn't good for my head, and you're so fond o' the sun.

Your sweet little yellow blossoms! I know just how they go!
I've seen 'em, and so I can see 'em again without eyes, you know;
But there's plenty and plenty o' things, I well can see and hear
That I never have seen or heard, and I need not eye nor ear.

I'll tell you o' some o' these, the wonderful things I see
While I'm lying here on my bed—there's water a-running free,
I see it splashing along over stones black, grey, and white,
And I watch it until it gets almost away from my sight.

Ah, now, it is nearly hid! O Jenny, it's true, it's true,
With masses and masses o' green, and all that green is *you;*
You, little Jenny, who look so nice and cool and sweet
With your dear little, green little legs, and your dear little, green little feet.

O Jenny, I love to see it! I love to see it! it's all
In the beautiful, wonderful place, that folks THE COUNTRY call:
I think how the birdies sing, and I think o' the flowers and the grass,
And I know the children are happy—they laugh and sing as they pass.

And you, little Jenny, there, in your lovely ditch all day
Have nothing on earth to do except to be green and gay:
And wouldn't one think that, if here, in London, you're bright with gold,
You'd be there a thousand times brighter, with yellow blossoms untold?

But it isn't so at all! The other way it is!
In London town, my dear, where one would think you'd miss
The beautiful water that washes your feet and keeps 'em green,
It's here that ten times as much o' your golden bloom is seen.

There, in your old red pot, hung up to catch the sun
That comes to that window of ours the most o' the afternoon,
You blossom and blossom as never you do in that stream so sweet,
Where the water is cool and clean about your wandering feet.

You run to greenness only, you gain but little o' gold,
The beautiful gold you give us, in just that morsel o' mould:
I'm very glad of it, Jenny, so glad that it is just so;
I never shall see that stream, nor the green o' THE COUNTRY, you know.

Can you guess who told me this? There's only one it could be,
Teacher—Tom's Sunday teacher—she told it all to me;
And she told me more than this—she gave me the meaning too—
It was such a pretty meaning, I like to tell it to you.

It's very nice and it's true—for Teacher says it's true,
That everything means something else—and always *means itself* too:
And this means—why, Jenny, it means—it's good for folks to do
The things they don't quite like, for instance, me and you.

For you, when you leave your streams, and come to a place so dull,
Instead of growing less pretty, are twice as beautiful:
Flowers and flowers, gold flowers, for Tom and Mother and me,
Instead of hardly a flower, and plenty o' green to see.

And *I*'m always a-lying here! I can't even *creep* like you!
Lame Jenny, and Creeping Jenny, those are the names for us two!
And I can't do nothing for Mother, so helpless and ill am I,
And you know, when I lay here first, how I used to sob and cry!

But it hurt poor Mother sore; and at last, one day, I said
I'd try so hard, so hard, to be very good instead.
And Mother kissed me so sweet, and held me so fast do you know,
It was almost nice to be ill to feel her love me so.

And Teacher says there are flowers that grow in a sick child's room,
Called Patience, and Love, and Trust, much better than golden bloom.
Lame Jenny may blossom with these, away from her play and fun—
Good night, little Creeping Jenny, the daylight is past and done.

A GIFT.

WHAT can I give, O well-beloved, to thee,
Whose clear, firm knock at my heart's door I heard;
I, reading o'er my life's old pages, blurred
Where bitter tears had fallen fast and free?
For thou didst enter in and comfort me
Whose soul was passion-tost and tempest-stirred,
Till I grew patient as a brooding bird,
And rest came down upon me, verily.

What can I give thee for a guerdon meet?
The utter depths and heights of love's sublime
I cannot fathom, dear, I cannot climb,
For sacred things to lay before thy feet:
I kneel thy suppliant, and I give thee, Sweet,
The right to go on giving for all time.

"AND NOW ABIDETH . . . . . HOPE."

OW calm and sweet it is to night! The full moon shineth down
With not a breath of wind to break her light on the golden brown
Of autumn leaves, and green of grass, and the folds of my black gown—

The gown I have worn since the heavy time my dear was taken away.
My soul is quiet too this night; just now I heard one say,
"We have not seen her look like that for many and many a day."

I smiled to hear—yes, even I, who not for long have smiled,
But only curved pale lips whose curve was rather proud than mild;
For now in me is born, I know, the heart of a little child.

I was sitting yesterday alone; my household tasks were done,
And time was come that I should pause from work to think upon
My darling, who, five years ago, went from the blessed sun.

The day was warm, the sky was blue, the sounds were gay I heard,
A stream that babbled o'er its stones, the chirp of many a bird,
And my sisters' talk, wherein a laugh seemed wed to every word.

I watched them walking hand in hand with that free step of theirs,
Fair faces only grave when raised to God in holy prayers;
I said, "God save them from the woe that took me unawares!"

"God give them all their hearts' desire! God keep them!" did I say,
Till vague "God keep" grew earnest strong, and then I flung away
The prayer, because He did not keep one dearer far than they.

"My darling from the dog He could have saved and would not save;
The terrible *too late* seals up the lips that cry and crave—
The love that saves the worst who breathe avails not in the grave.

"Myriads and myriads perished souls!—a tale that none can tell!
I heard it oft, but never knew till my beloved fell
From golden sun and golden life into the dark of hell.

"He who had sinned a grievous sin, was mad with grief and shame—
Oh, I was by his body fair, and so they hushed their blame,
But with maimed rites they buried him in a grave without a name.

"Beneath the sun no face more fair than that young face of his;
No lips more worthy to receive the Father's pardon-kiss;
The robe and ring had never graced a nobler one than this!"

So moaned I in my heart last eve, as never pale or dim
But clear as the day I saw it first, arose the face of him,
Whate'er to others, unto me fair beyond seraphim.

"Why am I thus, O God, my God?" I moaned in great despair;
Then rose and went out from the house, and passed my sisters fair;
They checked their laugh— I knew they said, "She goeth to weep there."

How long I sat upon the ground I know not, only I—
I all alone, with head bowed down by weight of agony;
It was so old, so old a prayer I prayed, that I might die.

But when the shadows lengthened out, I rose, my way I took
Home by the fields on the hillside, crossed by the little brook,
And there I met with one who had Christ's heaven in her sweet look.

She stopped and stood, as waiting me, for just a minute's space:
I looked, and thought I had never seen so beautiful a face;
Eyes' loving joy and joyful love, and mouth's benignant grace.

She only asked her way of me, but made me feel that I
In listening to her questioning, and giving my reply,
Had somehow done a gentle deed of lovely courtesy.

Simply, strangely, it came to pass, the woman went not on,
And I was fain to linger there until the set of sun;
And I had learned to bear my pain before the day was done.

Simply, strangely, it came to pass that I, who had not borne
To let my mother's children see my tears when I would mourn,
But was alone, yea, all alone, when I went and did return—

I, who was shy and all reserved with those whom blood made near,
Who wrapped myself in silence pale, from kinsfolk true and dear,
Was weeping on this woman's breast, as knowing her many a year.

I shall not see her here again who brought this life to me;
To-day she was to go away to work beyond the sea:
God hath a supreme joy for her wherever she may be.

Was it the look upon her face or the blessed words she said
That drew my soul with bands of love? O lover dead, *not* dead—
As one his mother comforteth so was I comforted.

Was comforted because I saw in that short hour much more
Than e'er these eyes of mine had seen in all my life before—
Dear God, how much Thou must forgive to us who try Thee sore!

Who try Thee sore in the sorest way that man his God can try,
Giving Thy love an earthly span with earthly life to die,
Thy Love, O Love, who art the same to all eternity.

Thou knowest I often trembled sore because a hope would flit
Across this darkened life of mine, and a moment lighten it
With a light more beautiful than dawn, than day more exquisite.

O gracious God, Thou knowest all, Thou knowest I was so weak
I dared not speak of wondrous things where I were first to speak,
I dared not seek the hidden truth if others would not seek.

I took the iron in my hand, I walked upon the share,
I seared my hands and seared my feet, and set my soul to bear
The agony in silentness, and thought Thy will was there.

I could not but depart from Thee when I thought thou didst this thing,
To see Thy sheep astray and have the power, not will, to bring
From loathly marish-flats of death into Thy sheltering.

But I did not wrong my human heart to say *Thy will be done;*
I sat in darkness, knowing well 'twas darkness, not the sun;
I slandered Thee, but never called Thee slandered *Loving One.*

I was twenty-five a month ago, and but one day the chief
Of light and good has been my own—O sin indeed and grief—
But now I say, *Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.*

Faithful and true, I say it o'er and o'er, *Faithful and true*,
Old things are safe within Thy hands Who makest all things new;
Lord, Thou hast done, and what Thou dost, Thyself will not undo.

I leave my darling in Thy hand, I know him safe with Thee;
His life with us was but an hour of his eternity,
Wherein he shall be sanctified, and by Thy truth made free.

CONVERSION.

I.

ONVERSION! Some will shake the head
and sneer
Even at the word: yet some can surely tell
How bitter, sweet, and irresistible,
The change came to their life, and all things here
Grew changed; the dusk was light, the dark was clear;
The clash of discords into music fell
As sweet and solemn as the sacring bell;
The silence throbbed harmonious on their ear.

The life of God in glorious billows prest
About their life, and stirred it as the roar
Of seas might stir a sea-bird on the shore,
That burst the shell beneath a barnfowl's breast;
So were they moved and could not be at rest;
So were they moved, once and for evermore.

II.

Yea, God's large life in awful beauty beat
About their life. Oh, trouble and joy and great
Sobbing of quick new sense, and passionate
Desire for something passing good and sweet!
And loins were girded up, and eager feet
Sped swiftly o'er the King's highway, where, late,
They had lingered in their weariful estate;
On, on, the coming of the King to greet.

"Stay, stay ye runners, what avails your speed?
Ye will not hasten Him Who comes, one whit;
No, not one moment earlier shall be lit
The lamp that must illume the night of need!—"
"Oh, we shall meet Him, see His face indeed,
And know the utter loveliness of it."

FURZE-BLOSSOM.

" OLK say," said Lily, my pupil, my maid with the golden head,
"When you find no bloom on the furze you may know that Love is dead;"
And she laughed, and her laugh rang clear with the dear delight of her heart.
"But the furze and the golden bloom are never, never apart;
Search and you find; which means that Love cannot die," she said.

Oh, that was the time when birds sang loud on every spray;
And laughter and love were abroad, and earth and her brood were gay;
And the sweet wild hyacinth rang her bonny blue bells for glee;
And the sky was clear, and the sun as bright as bright could be;
And Lily, the child, was glad, for her heart, like the earth, kept May.

But the heavy shadow of pain to darken her May upcrept,
And a great woe stood at her heart she must be dumb and accept;
And now must her life-blossoms die, for the joylight waxed all dim,
Or, safe on the breast of the Father, lift up their sheen to Him,
Unmarred, nay brighter and sweeter, because of the tears she has wept?

"Now is the golden bloom on the breast of the furze all dead;
And Love, poor child, for you, in the black grave burièd;
Veil your fair locks uncurled with the veil of widowhood,
Cry from your heart of hearts—Alas for the perished good!
No sap of delight again shall lift up the felled tree's head."

But the little white flower of a face was wonderful fair to see,
In the light of its old rare smile, that was half an answer to me;
And her soul sent out on her voice, from the depth of its life of lives,
The words all quick with the truth whereby man lives and thrives,
"God is Love." It is so. It is so, whatever be.

And a glory came to her eyes for the spoken faith so sweet;
And Nature at her dear wont, chimed in, as due and meet;
For lo! though the violets lay asleep in the winter's womb,
The breast of a furze-bush bore one token of golden bloom;
And I gathered it slowly, and laid it in reverence down at her feet.

MOTHERLESS.

HAT'S the meaning of it Mother, the meaning of it all?
Dear, alas, I do not know—
But a cloud is o'er my life that is the shadow of the pall
Spread above you long ago,
When they carried you away to that last home
Where all come.

Oh, that face, my mother's face, fair exceeding, dare I say,
And the little stately head,
And the warm white hand of comfort,—dust to dust and clay to clay,
Low she lieth, being dead;
Little grasses rustle soft, through cold and heat,
At her feet.

Better, verily, I think, we twain had loved each other,
Had we only, only, known
Better, you, this child of yours, and better, I, my mother,
Ere your time was past and gone:
There were heights and depths our love had left unproved,
My beloved.

Oh, the sting that's in the words, *I cannot understand*—
Oh, the look into the eyes;
Oh, the utter, utter pathos of the pressure of the hand,—
All my heart breaks out in cries,
Cries, beloved, like the bitter cries it cried
When you died.

I am glad for sun and wind, and the stress of life, nor seek
Just for rest and merely rest;
But at times I only want to lay my cheek against your cheek,
And my breast against your breast;
There in quietness and silentness to lie,
You and I.

Oh, I should not ask to dream, and I should not need to sleep,—
Just lie breathing happy breath,
With silence wrapping both of us, so wonderful and deep,
One might fancy it were death,
Yet be conscious of the gladness and the gain,
After pain.

It should be when night was come, and had given all mortal things
The beatitude of rest;
And the sick and tired and sinful, underneath her brooding wings,
For a little while were blest;
I most blest of all, I think, and satisfied
At your side.

And from out that happy calm, happy quiet, none should rouse
Till the east were living flame,
And the stir of busy feet and busy tongues were in the house,
And the hour of labour came;
Then 'twere time to move and feel but empty air,
Where you were.

Mother! Mother! Mother sweet, come and let me tell you all,
Or else, tell me that you know;
And your love will greatly comfort and your blessed presence fall
As a healing upon woe;—
So, a child again, upon your heart I lie,—
Now, Goodbye.

KATEY

(SCENE—A LONDON HOSPITAL).

"ARRAH, ye Riverence is welcome! plase to sit down by my bed.
Thankye! how kind o' ye, sir, to settle my poor owld head!
I wish ye a better offus! Well, God 'll be yer reward!
Won't ye sit down? I'm afeard that chair is a thrifle hard.
I heard ye spakin' just now, an' wasn't I glad for to hear!
Like jew on the grass, there's a taste o' the brogue on yer tongue my dear,—
Oh, I ax yer pardon, sir, but it carries me far away
Out o' this great big London, it carries me over the say
Back to my Irish mountains, back to my dear owld home—
Ah, did I want for to lave it? ah, did I want for to roam?
Didn't I want for to lie, when the Lord 'ud call me to rest,
Close by my owld man's side, in his grave away in the west?
Didn't I think my daughther 'ud close my eyes for me
There, in my green Ballymore, an' go back—ah, machree! machree!—
To her husband's comfortin' arms, an' the childher about her knee!

"There's tears in yer Riverence' eyes! well, God reward ye, sir;
I won't be troublin' ye long.—Last night I was dhramin' iv *her:*
She came an' sat by my bed in the chair you're sittin' in now;
She was dhrest in a long white gownd, an' she looked—I can't tell how—
Purty an' swate is no words; she'd got a look in her eyes
I niver seen there afore, so innicent, yit so wise.
She sang a soft little song, the kind o' song that we
Do sing when we've suckled our babies an' sits wid 'em on our knee,
So happy we wants no words, but can't help singin', ye see.
The baby was in her arms, an'—this is the sthrangest part—
I was glad for to see that baby, whose bornin' broke my heart;
It smiled up into my face, an' I loved it, an'—what did she say?—
I can't remimber a bit—an' she kissed me an' wint away.

"I'd niver refused her a kiss; I somehow think, if I had,
That kiss iv hers 'ud ha' scorcht me, an' burnt me, 'an dhriven me mad:
But I hadn't; she lay in my arms, an' I spoke not a word o' blame;
For wasn't she flesh o' my flesh, an' wasn't her shame my shame?

"I'd always held up my head; I'd always been stout and sthrong
In blamin' the laste little turn away from the right to the wrong;
An' I hadn't no pity for them that takes, as people say,
The right o' the marriage-time afore the marriage-day.
But she, my girl! my girl! I knew that she was good;
No thought iv her heart but clane; ay, sir, I undherstood
Much more in that hour I sat wid her poor little head on my breast,
Much more in that hour o' my life nor in all the years o' the rest.

Ay, it was sinful, I know, but wasn't it dhreadful sad?
An' when them we cares for goes wrong, sure it don't seem quite
so bad.

"'He, who was he?' what matther! it's betther to let him be!
One o' the quality, sir, a gentleman born was he.
He might ha' made love to a lady, a lady he could ha' wed;
But he chose to make love to my girl, an' ruun my girl instead.
The ministher's daughther, she liked him, an' she would ha'
been a prize,
Wid larnin' galore in her head; but she hadn't my colleen's eyes;
An' my colleen loved him so, an' thought every word he said
As thrue as the Bible itself, an'—O God!—my girl is dead.

"Thankye! it does me good to have ye howld my hand,
You that are clane in the sowl an' yit can undherstand
All o' the sin an' the pain—No, plase don't go away—
God bless ye for cryin' them tears!—'An' what if *him?*' ye say.

"Sir, I dunno, an', what's more, I think I don't want to know:
Afore I knew how it was, he had gone away, an' so
I niver axt anny queshtions; I owe him a terruble grudge,
But I don't want to pay it, yer Riverence; I lave him to God,
his Judge.

"What do ye say, sir?"—"Suppose he had never dreamt how
it was,
Had never thought *that* could be—had gone away because
Things of importance had called him—"? "Well, sir, I only say
God knows all about them things iv unportance that called him
away."

"But suppose when he heard—when they told him that Katey—
that *she* was dead,
He had nearly died of the sorrow, and scarce could lift up his
head?
And suppose he had sought out her mother and meant—ah
God!—to atone,
But found she had left the place, and none knew where she had
gone?"

"Well, suppose all this, yer Riverence? If he had ha' found me,
ye see,
He'd ha' offered a five-poun'-note, or even a ten, maybe:
An' I might ha' spit in his face an' curst him: an' now I say,
'The Lord forgive him his sin, as I forgive him to-day.'"

[Note.—The short *u* is sounded as in *put*: the short *o*, when it represents an older *u*, as in *come*, *love*, and in some other instances, as *word*, has the same sound. The long *i* in the part of Ireland which I know is incapable of being symbolised; it is a close sound, entirely unlike the *oi* of the stage Irishman, or the *ai* of the cockney. The short *i* in *him*, where unemphasized, is an impure vowel. The *r* is a full consonant.]

"IN SHADOW ONE, AND ONE IN LIGHT."

TANDS a little child close to the window
Of a stately mansion's stateliest room,
Framed in folds of heavy crimson velvet,
In the gloaming that will soon be gloom.

Back are tost the rings of flossy yellow
From the candid brows and eyes so sweet,
On the lips the angels' kisses linger,
Making melody of speech complete.

Little hands that often are in mischief,
Little feet that tire not any way,
Lithe frame knit with all the supple beauty
Shall be crowned with strength in manhood's day.

Stands a little child outside that window,
Sharp against the sky of sunshine bare;
And the rain and wind smite very sorely
Brows uncovered save by dank soft hair.

Little hands that know betimes transgression,
Little feet that know not how to play,
Great blue eyes that fear and droop unduly
If the full gaze meet them any way.

Little hands are stretched out for the pity
God sends sometimes even on the street;
Oh, the lips like white wind-parted rosebuds!
Oh, the little bare and trembling feet!

Two blue eyes are looking from the window,
Two blue eyes a depth of praying speak;
One young heart beats high in yearning pity,
One young heart would fain its shelter seek.

One young voice cries, "Wait, for I am coming!"
One young voice makes answer, "Come to me!"
Bitterly the wind of autumn bloweth
All athwart the bleak square wearily.

Little hands are clasped for just a moment,
One blest moment at that mansion's door,
Ere the clear fate-voice's intervening,
And the parting that's for evermore.

From the heart of evening drop the shadows,
As the stony walls part two child-hearts;
One looks tearfully from out the window,
One smiles up as slowly he departs.

One a mother hath who wears serenely
Crown of gracious wifehood calm and sweet;
One a mother had whom shame and sorrow
Did to death long since upon the street.

One works loyal to a grand vocation,
  Loves and toils that larger light be shed,
And in peace is gathered to his fathers,
  And the cross is graven at his head.

One dies old, while few the years are numbered
  Of a life, whose dearest given good
Was the moment child and child stood clasping
  Hands in Nature's bonds of brotherhood.

CHRISTOPHERA.

THE sun shone through the window small,
The autumn sun, one eventide,
Right on the little room which Love
Into a home had glorified;
There sat a woman and a boy,
With happy faces, side by side.

It was her hour to pause awhile,
And take, because of him, her rest;
And softly on her face there glowed
The smile wherein the child was blest.
He was her one dead sister's son,
And she his dearest and his best.

Eight years agone, by her she sat,
And caught the latest flicker of breath,
And gave that promise true which brought
A light upon the grey of death;
Such light as comes when prayer hath heard
The gracious voice that answereth.

"A story for the sunset hour."
"What story, dearest, shall it be?"
"My own brave, strong Saint Christopher!"
And the boy smiled expectantly,
As soft she stooped to kiss his brow,
And lifted him upon her knee.

She told how one his gift of strength
Unto the Son of Mary gave,
And how he bore the pilgrims safe,
That giant strong and meek and brave,
Through cold and heat and smooth and rough,
Across the trouble of the wave.

And how, one night of nights, there came
A little Pilgrim strangely fair,
And how the giant marvelled much
To see so young a Pilgrim there,
But lifted Him and found His weight
Was well nigh more than he could bear.

And how the wild wind roared and raged,
And the wild water foamed and swelled,
Till he was nearly done to death;
But still his gallant way he held
Until he reached the further bank
And saw the mighty tempest quelled;

And knew the Pilgrim he had borne
Across that deep without a ford;
And knelt, in rapture passing speech,
To see His face and hear His word,
The loveliest Face, the sweetest Voice
Of Christ, the Everlasting Lord.

Then silence fell upon the twain,
Until the young boy, reverently,
Answered, as if she spoke aloud
Her asking, "Inasmuch as ye
Have done it to the least of these,
Ye sure have done it unto Me."

And when upon the child's fair eyes
The shade of happy slumber crept,
The woman, yet awaking long,
Her station by his bedside kept;
Hands busy, heart fulfilled with God,
Until her time came, and she slept.

None knew, save Christ the Lord, alone,
What pain had girt her uttered vow
To bear that little child and keep—
But pain was lost in blessing now;
And God's fair smile behind the cloud
Had caught her on the lifted brow.

And whatsoever was to come,
What awful tempest's stress and strain
Should beat around her very soul,
She still would wrestle, might and main,
And bear the Pilgrim on her heart,
And win the further bank and gain.

And when the bank was won and gained,
Through that sheer deep without a ford,
Should she not kneel, like Christopher,
And see the Face, and hear the word—
The loveliest Face, the sweetest Voice
Of Christ the Everlasting Lord?

TO A MASTER IN PARADISE.

I.

OUR life, O Master, was a mighty rock,
Reared amid breakers, whereupon a flock
Of birds were ever nestled; sometimes white
Soft things, and sometimes fierce ones and untame,
Shorn of their plumy pride by pain and fright;
Hurt of the darts they had provoked; who came,
Tost by the heavy tempest to your breast;
Craving but quiet and receiving rest.

God bad His waters over you to come,
And hide your shelter from the wayfaring;
So the poor pilgrim birds of weary wing
Missed their good rock amid the breakers' foam;—
And flew until they found a better thing;
A sunlit country for their rest and home.

II.

Your life, O Master, was a mighty tree
Which dew and sun and rain had perfectly
Matured, and brought to bear in plenitude
  And utter beauty and divine content,
Its leaves for healing, and its fruit for food,
  With Eden smells of wondrous ravishment;
    And men and women there were healed and fed,
    And in your happy shadow gladdened.

God's voice did break the tree and lay it low;
  And all those men and women, shelterless,
  Weary and hungry, in their great distress,
Mourned for their loss with very bitter woe;—
  Then found that Home whither all souls must press;
And God's own self for evermore did know.

"EMPEROR EVERMORE."

HO bad thee do and suffer bids thee rest:
Sleep, greatest Hohenzollern, on His breast.

He gave thee strength of body and soul, and then
He gave thee will to do and think for men.

He taught thee to possess thy soul and wait:
He called thee to the ruler's high estate,

Soldier and statesman, great in field and rede,
Strong in thy thought and glorious in thy deed;

Yet mightier strength and brighter glory shed
Kaiser, on thee, by suffering perfected:

For more than empire welded, battle won,
Is to have learnt to say *Thy will be done.*

So, on thy life of life He wrote it plain,
All the divine significance of pain.

Thee, when the great death-angel came, he found
King unanointed, emperor uncrowned.

Better than gold and oil of sovranty,
His patience crowned thee and anointed thee;

Thee, by His grace Who loved and did and bore,
King over pain, and suffering's emperor.

WHILE THE GRASS GROWS.

"Tout vient à qui sait attendre."

"Yes, but 'While the grass grows'—the proverb is something musty."

IN a country, where I know not; maybe very far away,
'Neath those skies which sometime sheltered Master Raphael Hythloday,
Or perchance in merry England,—let it be as be it may;

There the grass was growing, growing; one who stooped could wellnigh hear
Fluctuant wavelets of the spring-sap, softly throbbing on the ear,
For the grass was growing, growing, in the growth-tide of the year.

Oh, the glory of the meadows, oh, the verdurous seas on seas,
Blown on by the self-same winds that cool the 'delicate plain called Ease;'
If a child therein should enter he were hidden to the knees.

Sweet the smell of that fair herbage by the sheen of spring-time lit;
Martlets skimming swiftly over slacken speed because of it;
And the breeze above it sweeping maketh music exquisite.

And away, away in distance, far from meadow-sheen and glow,
On the barren moor where never grace of meadow-growth can go,
Is the seely steed a-waiting for the goodly grass to grow.

Can he sniff the delicate odour as he crops with pain and care
At the scrannel where one, looking, would in verity declare
For a steed were sure no pasture on that soil so stiff and bare?

He is very lean, my masters, leaner than behoves, indeed,
Slender though he be and graceful, as befitteth clean his breed—
When the grass have grown to ripeness ye will feed your starving steed.

'Patience, patience for a little; one must learn to bear and wait;
Only patience and it cometh, matters not if soon or late;
Seely steed, have patience only, plenty knocketh at the gate.'

Now is come the time of plenty; in the lush green shall he tread;
In that fairest of all meadows shall the seely steed be fed;—
Nay, my masters, take no troubling, for the seely steed is dead.

In the busy streets of London, years, perhaps, or months, ago,
You might see a little lady wending daily to and fro;
Once her step was quick and lightsome; but that step grew heavy and slow.

She had fought a manful battle, she had worked while work she could;
She was only one of many struggling hard for daily food,
And she lost her little foothold, sorely baffled and withstood.

She had loved the strenuous life of women and men who 'work apace'—
Good is Labour, great is Labour, 'Labour wears a lovely face;'
But they pressed so hard upon her that they pushed her from her place.

She had written many letters to her friends of other days
When she needed labour only for her pleasure or their praise:
And they answered with a promise, they would think of her always.

'Everything to him there cometh who has learnt the way to wait;
Time would surely crown her patience; slow and sure is fortune's gait.'
(Oh, the green grass in its growing! oh, the seely steed's estate!)

Did she wait a little longer something fair and sweet were won,
Easeful work should fill her daytime 'neath the shining of the sun,
And the dews of evening softly cool her feet when day was done.

And she read their letters knowing how her time was come to meet
Him who stilleth pain and sorrow when he bringeth silent feet
To the quiet country homestead and the noisy city street.

Oh, the grass was growing, growing in the air that quickeneth;
Soon an ample pasture for her utmost need, your poet saith;
But she looked to God and gave her to His angel men call Death.

On her thin white face of calmness now no shade of trouble falls,
As she lies on naked boarding, bounded round by naked walls:
You will find her little havings underneath yon Golden Balls.

And a letter lies beside her telling of relief from need,
Rest and home and joy and plenty; now the grass is grown indeed,
But alas the seely worker! and alas the seely steed!

What's to say O men and women? When is help of no avail?
That's enough, methinks, for saying; and a poet still must fail
If he plainly point a moral where he should but tell a tale.

TO ONE WHO REJOICES.

EAR heart, our souls, in holiday with thee,
Learn more than all their working-time can teach;
And, bowed to thy sweet will and pleasure, reach
A little of the freedom of the free.
Thou canst the thread of heavenly melody
Discern in well-nigh inarticulate speech,
And thine anointed eyes can see in each
And every thing what Love would have us see.

Oh, blind and deaf and dumb, our way we have gone,
And missed the rapture of everlasting hills,
And missed the rhythm of ocean and of home,
And the delight of whisperings and thrills
Of sunlit leaves that shower have rained upon;
And sweetness more than honey and honeycomb.

IN THE MORNING LIGHT.

LEEPEST thou still, my own beloved one?
The air is buoyant with the breath of morn,
The earth, which wept last night, of sunshine lorn,
Smiles once again to greet the blessed sun;
A good June day is cheerily begun.
The bees are glad because of flowers new-born,
The breezelet crisps along the green young corn,
High in blue air rings the lark's clarion.

Wake, my beloved, wake, and come to me!
Come with the dew of youth upon thy hair;
Come, a new warmth upon the happy air,
A sweeter than the roses' fragrancy;
Come with thine eyes yet deep from holy prayer,
And calm with peace which God has whispered thee.

TWO SOULS NEEDED EACH OTHER.

WO souls needed each other,
Needed each other utterly;
They cried in the dark for each other,
And Love heard their cry.

Love led them close to each other,
Shewing them where to stand and wait;
For the time of Love comes never
Too soon or too late.

And the two souls saw each other
In the light and beauty of the sun:
And the two souls knew each other,
And the two were one.

THE ECCE HOMO OF MONTE PINCIO.

THERE'S a picture of the Saviour, of the Master crucified,
Very pale and marred and bleeding for the bitter scourges plied,
With the five wounds deeply wounded, in the hands and feet and side.

With the monks of Monte Pincio bides that wonder, and they tell
How 'twas wrought in deadly cunning by the king of death and hell,
As he shewed the sight that met him on the day his empire fell.

Oh, he wrought it and he made it for the damning of a soul;
But God took it and God used it so the damner should have dole,
So the lost one should be found again, the sick to death be whole.

'Twas a young man, as they tell us, turned his back on God and grace,
Spent his body and soul and substance, stood in very evil case;
And he would not turn him homeward, would not seek his Father's face.

Nay but, heart-hard, sought the face of him who was his Father's
foe;
Promised him his soul immortal, if that ill one would bestow
For his mortal life the purchase of all lust and pomp and show.

And the deed drawn up was waiting, with his blood it must be
signed,
Yet he paused a moment, seeing how a thought rushed through
his mind—
Praise to God for that His goodness, and His mercy ever kind.

'Now before I sign it, prithee, tell me did it so betide
Thou wert witness when the God-man hung upon a cross and
died?'
'Yea, for I was there and saw it,' so the evil one replied.

'Canst thou shew the sight?' he asked him; 'canst thou paint
the picture true?'
'Better mine than any other hand that ever picture drew.'
'Paint it then, and let me see it, ere I give thee all thy due.'

Then the picture was before him, and he saw the Crucified;
And the strong repentance smote him who had strayed so far
and wide,—
Broken, bruised, in utter anguish, he bemoaned himself and
cried.

Then THE NAME OF NAMES he uttered in his passion and
his pain,
And the evil one was stricken and he might not strike again,
Swift into the vasty darkness of the air he fled amain.

So the young man childly meekened in his heart, and longing sore
To be only God's and serve the Crucified for evermore,
Sought the monks of Monte Pincio, prayed them open him their door.

Of the fervent ones most fervent, of the lowly lowliest,
With the Capucins abode he till God called him to his rest,
And he saw the Glorious Vision with his eyes and so was blest.

And the very wondrous picture, his salvation which had been,
It was borne to Monte Pincio by the hand of Mary Queen,
And, they say, at Monte Pincio still that picture may be seen.

THE VISION OF SAINT TERESA.

GOD'S maid, Teresa, sleeping in the night,
A very strange and wondrous vision saw;
A woman with a bearing full of awe,
A great and dreadful lady, met her sight;
Her left hand held a water-pail, her right
A pan of flaming fire; and she did draw
The saint's soul after her, as God's own law
Draws souls and bodies to their depth or height.

'What dost thou with that mystic burden thine?'
'To quench all hell, to burn all heaven, I go,
And drive the souls God made to God's divine;
No thought of hell's deep dungeon, heaven's high throne,
No thought of virtue's meed, of sin's great woe,
Just to love God for God Himself alone.'

TO A POET.

IF song is born of sorrow,
We grudge you not your pain:
Weep your salt tears to-morrow,
But sing to us again.

If song is born of laughter,
Laugh with us, at us, too;
But sing, sing to us after,
For none can sing like you.

Weeping and laughing, poet,
In soul and voice grow strong;
For this is life, we know it,
And life is the source of song.

SAID THE TOMB UNTO THE ROSE,

FROM THE FRENCH OF VICTOR HUGO.

AID the tomb unto the rose,
"The tears thou art watered of
At dawn, O flower of love,
What doest thou with those?"
Said the rose unto the tomb,
"What doest thou with all
That into thy gulf doth fall,
Into thy gulf of gloom?"

Said the rose, "O dreary tomb,
Of these tears I make in the gloom
An amber and honey perfume,
The sweetest to earth that is given."
Said the tomb, "O weeper, see,
Of each soul that comes to me
I fashion an angel of heaven."

EXPECTANS EXPECTAVI.

WEEP out the house and dress it fair,
Make ready hall and room;
I who have waited very long
Shall meet my brave bridegroom,
And he will take me by the hand,
Kiss me, and lead me home.

He did not come to fetch me home
In my time of merry youth;
He waited till the wrinkles were
About my eyes and mouth.
What matter? His face will touch my face,
And make its furrows smooth.

Oh, I shall lie at rest, at rest,
Upon his true bosom;
Lulled sweetlier far than they are lulled
Who hear the songs of home,
As they lie, half-waking, half-asleep,
In the happy summer-gloam.

Gather fair flowers to greet my love;
  Flowers at whose heart is laid
Delight and fragrance; lilies, white
  As the soul of Mary Maid:
Roses that laugh in the blessed sun,
  And smile in the blessed shade.

What say ye, gentle maidens mine?—
  "Thy coming bridegroom, he
Loves better the cypress and the yew,
  And the rue and the rosemary"—
Nay, let me bring mine own offering;
  I know him better than ye.

Good night, good night, beloveds all,
  For this beloved saith
I must leave all and cleave to him;
  And quickly he cometh;
His eyes are stars and his voice the sea's;
  And his name is called Death.

FAIRY-GIVINGS.

ARRY and Julia's children
Were playing by me to-day,
In the shadow of the hedgerow,
Where restingly I lay.

They played at being fairies,
The givers of all things good,
With wands they had bid me charm them,
From out of the willow-wood.

They made my hammock-netting
With gold and silver shine;
They clothed in gorgeous clothing
This very body of mine.

They brought me gifts of beauty,
For all my needings meet;
A golden pencil to write with,
And fruits so large and sweet.

They brought me "the root of all fruits,"
Which grows on a wondrous tree;
It sheds not a leaf in winter,
But is always fair to see.

And, best of all, the children
  Set it my head above,
And I lay beneath it gladly,
  The blessed "plant of love."

Its leaves are shadow and comfort,
  Its fruit is healing and food.—
Ah, children, dearest children,
  You have given me the best of good.

Oh, thanks for my gold and diamonds,
  Oh, thanks for my gown so brave;—
But the sweetest of all your givings
  Was the plant of love you gave.

BRIGHTMERE FARM,
August, 1883.

CHURCH-MICE.

TWO little church-mice!
Some good folk they laught—
"Going to be married!
Why, they must be daft!"

Two little church-mice!
Some good folk they sighed—
"Not a rap to bless them with!
How will they provide,

"Two little church-mice,
For servants, house, and dress?
Isn't it a painful thing?
Quite immoral? Yes.

"Two little church-mice,
With nought but health and brains
In the way of capital—
Fools for their pains!

"Two little church-mice!
Much they know about
All the troubles of the world,
Sooth, a mighty rout!

"Two little church-mice
Tempting Providence!
Won't they have a time of it,
Learning common-sense!

"Two little church-mice!
Won't they find it sweet—
Bread and cheese for working-days,
Beef for Sunday treat!"

Two little church-mice—
All folk know it's nice,
When young folk from older folk
Meekly take advice!

But these little church-mice,
Very bad of them,
Gaed their ain gait quietly,
And let who would condemn.

For the two little church-mice
Found it less a bother
To do without all sorts of things
Than do without each other.

The two little church-mice,
In rain as well as sun,
Stick to text which sayeth *Two*
Are better than is one.

And the two little church-mice
Find, whate'er befall,
What poets call the cruel world
Is not so bad at all.

Two little church-mice—
What about them? oh!
They are happy little mice,
That is all I know.

FOLK-SONG,

FROM THE OLD FRENCH.

HAT shall one do if Love depart?
I sleep not night nor day:
All night I think of my true-love,
Him who is far away.

I gat me from my restless bed,
And donned my gown of grey,
And went out through the postern gate
To the garden at break of day.

I heard the bonny laverock then,
The nightingale did sing,
And thus she spake in her own speech,
"Behold my love coming

"In a brave boat up the Seine river,
Wrought of the pleasant pine;
The sails are all of satin sheen,
The ropes of silken twine:
The mainmast is of ivory,
The rudder of gold so fine.

"The good sailors who man the bark
Are not of this country;
The one is the son o' the King o' France,
He wears the fleur-de-lis;
The other's the son—but what care I?
My own true-love is he."

THE STREAM FROM THE SEA DIVIDED,

FROM THE ITALIAN.

THE stream from the sea
divided
Bathes the valley and
mountain;
Goeth, a traveller,
In the river;
Goeth, a prisoner,
In the fountain;
Murmureth, sigheth ever,
Till, at length, it turns to the sea;
To the sea that gave it being,
And fed that being duly;
And where, after long delaying
Of weariful, tedious straying,
It hopeth at rest to be.

TO ONE STRICKEN AND SMITTEN.

OES not thy door stand open free,
Ever day by day and night to me?—
I will come in and sing to thee.

Come, with the tears scarce dry on my cheek,
Come to thy heart, beloved, and speak
Of love the strong, in my words the weak.

Rough is the way thy feet have trod;
Ah, and thy blood hath stained the sod;
Who shall entreat for thee to God?

Lo, but the earth at rest doth lie,
Drinking in dew abundantly—
Why should thy soul be parched and dry?

Lo, but the earth laughs laughter free,
Girt with the sunbeams' grace and glee—
Thou art bedrenched in thine agony.

Shall I not sing for thee soft and low,
That which I sang for thee long ago?—
O my darling, I love thee so.

Dear, while thy fretted spirit curbs
Hunger with life's most bitter herbs,
And while the rush and noise disturbs,

And while the thorns yet pierce thy feet,—
Yea, to the end of peace complete,
I will come in and love thee, sweet.

AVE, LUX.

THE light has chased the dark at last;
All hail, thou golden morning,
With happy breeze for that wild blast
Which all the night-time gone and past,
Shrieked out a woful warning,
When high waves leapt along the shore,
The voice of Death their thundering roar,
Control and pity scorning:
Nay, hush, there's peace at earth's deep core,
The light has come, the dark is o'er,—
All hail, thou golden morning!

TO THE HONOURABLE RODEN NOEL.

ODEN NOEL, by the grace of God true seer,
Royal poet, and knight in Christ's high chivalry,
Deeply faithful to the present and the future,
And so keeping to the past your loyalty;
Take this greeting from a heart aglow to greet you
With high honour reverently.

Well you might have lingered in the lap of Nature,
Crowned with all her fairest flowers for coronal;
Drinking ever of her love and of her beauty,
Keeping delicately dainty festival;
Singing lovely songs of mystic perfect music,
Heard in her beloved hall;

For she knew you from your birthtide and she claimed you,
Taught you of her myriad tones and thrills and stirs;
Whispered secrets in your ear which whoso knoweth
Hath for aye the freedom of the universe;—
But a greater voice than Nature's spoke and called you,
In a mightier tone than hers.

Yes, you heard a greater voice than hers, and hearkened,
And your soul leapt up in swift obedience then;
And you went with smells of woodland bloom about you,
And you looked abroad with clear undaunted ken,
And you took your portion with the whole world's children,
With its women and its men.

All the strength and splendid passion of your being
In the sweat and blood of the great world is baptized;
And with God and your leal heart, O Roden Noel,
You have kept the vigil time, the mystic tryst;
So the knightly harness girds you, and your shoulder
Knows the accolade of Christ.

He Who teaches by the shouting of the peoples,
He Who teaches by the kinglone eagle's cry,
He Who teaches in the fullness of the noontide,
And in shadow of the midnight's mystery,
In the surging of the mart, and in the silence
Of the soul He cometh nigh;

Very freely did He give you of His giving,
Royal gifts in plenitude, nor stint nor dole;
And He drew you very closely, very closely,
To the mighty Heart Which comprehends the Whole;
As "the burden of the Incommunicable"
Then He loosened from your soul.

Oh, the soul that once hath known the highest beauty
Cannot dwell content with any meaner good ;—
Ay, Sir Tristram, what is *she* that she should win you,
Isoud Blanchemains, though she be full sweet of mood?
You whose arms have clasped *her* once, whose lips have kissed her, Even her, *La Belle Isoud.*

Tell us, Poet of the things that meet the vision
Of the God-anointed eye which truly sees,
Knowing by the things of earth the things of heaven,
God by man, divine by human, those by these,
As one knows aright the splendid shapely body
By the foot of Herakles.

Oh, 'large utterance of the early gods!' Oh, larger
And diviner utterance still must surely fall
From the later lips of manhood that, in wrestling,
Overcomes the foe, and overleaps the wall;
Sees the face of Sin and Death, and stands a victor
Over Sin and Death and all.

Knight of God, and minstrel high and brave, I greet you,
And I bid you still ride onward to the fight.
Fight on, Taillefer, and sing the song of Roland!
Fight on, Christian, sing the song of Love and Right,
Till the Sun you bear emblazoned on your banner
Be victorious over night.

OH, THE GLORY OF THE MORNING!

H, the glory of the morning !
Oh, the rapture of delight !
Oh, the pride and joy and beauty,
Infinite, yea, infinite !
We are young and strong, beloved,
And our hearts are full of light,
And we think this rapture must be
Infinite, yea, infinite.
But a shadow creepeth o'er us,
Shadow for the blessed light;
Cool and chill and cold it falleth,—
Is it death or only night?

A WINSOME LADY, BLITHE AND FAIR.

A winsome lady, blithe and fair,
With sunlight on her tresses,
And lips so lovely pure, they wear
A smile as holy as a prayer
From one who stands and blesses:
And chaste and loyal passion stirs
The pulses of this heart of hers
Which beats so strong and steady;
And all delights in this combine,
That I am hers and she is mine,
This golden-hearted lady.

WHY, IF ALL POETS CROWN THEIR LOVES WITH VERSE.

HY, if all poets crown their loves
with verse,
Should my beloved miss her due
of me;
Go with her forehead bare so utterly
Of rhythmic gold her poet should make hers?
Scarce would it fret her whose deep spirit stirs
My spirit; for she knoweth well that she
Beyond all friends, all kin, has gained to see
Into my soul, its better and its worse.

It is no fancy dear, no fair conceit,
Which hails it God's own voice that bad my soul
Sob up through all its bonds of self control,
Hearing the sound of this beloved's feet,
Laugh, cry, as children do. But, O my sweet,
Let me be still, who dare not speak the whole.

FROM ONE TO ANOTHER.

Y beautiful, sorrowful lady,
Whose spirit has entered mine,
I bid you to be partaker
Of our fellowship's seal and sign;
Come eat of my bread of affliction,
Come drink of my bitter wine.

Who gave you to me, my darling,
He wills you to suffer with me:
Young, strong, and so full of passion,
A long, long time it will be
Before the struggle is over,
And Christ shall set me free.

The freedom you pray Him to give me
Is not the freedom of death,
But the grace full slow of attainment,—
The spirit that quickeneth
All aspiration and motion,
And every out-going breath.

The awful love which knoweth
Nor limit nor period;
Which crowneth with bloom and fruitage
The dry, unsightly rod;—
To live is to love, my darling,
To love is to be like God.

I was sore athirst, anhungered,
And weary upon the feet,
As I stood by those red, red apples
Which tempted me sore to eat;—
The bitterest thing at that moment
To me would have tasted sweet.

Oh, bread that I might have eaten!
Oh, stoup of strengthening wine!
Oh, bread for the whole world's hunger!
Oh, juice of the living vine!
God's life that I might have taken,
And I turned away mine eyne.

Dear, fold your arms around me,
Who am faint and tired and weak;
And pillow my head on your shoulder,
And lay my cheek to your cheek,
O love, my love,—and be silent,
If so it please you, or speak.

A DISCIPLE.

"*For so saith Saint Bernard, 'Quoties vincis, toties coronaberis.'*"

IT is told in *The Lives of the Fathers*
That once a disciple kept
A watch by his weary master,
The whole long while he slept.

He had sat before his master,
And hearkened his holy lore;
But the teacher was worn and tired,
And at last he taught no more;

For upon the willing spirit
The frailty of flesh had prest,
And the slumber sealed his eyelids,
And wrapt him around with rest.

So the lad sat still before him,
Nor rested in sleep, for, lo,
He must not leave the master,
Until he had bid him go.

And because of the tender pity
That 'runneth in gentle heart,'
He would not arouse the master,
To know if he might depart.

The old man went on sleeping,
Before him the lad sat still;
And the time crept on full slowly,
Till dawn broke gray and chill.

Then the master woke from slumber,
And, looking around, he said,
'Art here yet, my disciple?
Now get thee straight to bed.'

And, when he was gone, the master
Lay in his sleep again;
And, lo, in his sleep, a vision
Came to him clear and plain.

He saw, in a lovely palace,
A glorious golden throne,
With raiment rich and royal,
And seven fair crowns thereon.

A voice came through the silence,
There spake to him one in white,—
'This throne and these crowns the seven,
Thy disciple hath earned to-night.'

The master woke from his sleeping,
And called to the lad, and spoke,
'How was it with thee while I slumbered,
And thou sattest till I awoke?'

Quoth the lad, 'I thought full often
To waken thee sure were meet;
But I could not, for very pity,
Because thou didst sleep so sweet.'

And, oh, I was fain be going,
For sleep did mine eyelids grieve;
But thou hadst not bid me quit thee,
And I must not without thy leave.'

'And how often,' said the master,
'Didst conquer thy thought for me?'
Then smiled the boy disciple,
'It was good seven times,' quoth he.

The master smiled upon him,
For he knew within him this,
How the seven crowns of his vision
Were the seven kinds of bliss

That should come to him who would not
Be tempted to seek his rest,
But waited, himself denying,
And, waiting, had won the best.

WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THEE?

HAT have I to do with Thee,
Jesus Christ of Nazareth?
I, whose hardness did to death
One Who left His heaven for me:
I, who looked upon Thy Tree,
Saw Thy friends their vigils keep,
While mine eyes refused to weep—
What have I to do with Thee?

What have I to do with Thee?—
To Thy feet, O Master, borne,
And beneath Thy banner sworn
Aye to fight and manfully—
What have I to do with Thee?
Fed with bread of Thee that speaks,
Slavedom's cucumbers and leeks,
Egypt's flesh-pots would I see.

What have I to do with Thee?
See my breast to Thee is bare—
Lord, I cannot feel nor care,
Dead my heart is verily;

Even Thy depth of agony,
  Even Thy awful strength of love,
  Moves me not, ah, will not move;—
What have I to do with Thee?

What have I to do with Thee?
  These were words that devils used;
  Must I speak them, who refused
In Thy saving saved to be?
Fallen and ruined utterly,
  I, soul-suicide, confess
  Matchless truth and righteousness,
Who have nought to do with Thee.

Jesus, Jesus, stoop to me;
  From the sea of sin high-waved
  Save me, for I will be saved;—
What have I to do with Thee?
Make me mourn full bitterly,
  Make mine eyes with tears out-gush,
  Make mine hardened forehead blush;—
What have I to do with Thee?

What have I to do with Thee?
  I am here, and will not go
  Till the touch Thou do bestow
Of Thine healing hand on me.
  Bound and fettered, set me free;
  Freed one, for Thy servant take;
This the prayer of prayers I make;
  This have I to do with Thee.

PER TE AD LUCEM.

HEN I pass out to the light,
From dark to exceeding bright,
From cold to the warmth of the sun,
How shall that good be won?
What is the way for me?
Master, how shall it be?

How if the longed-for way
Which I hunger for to-day,
Which I pray for with eager breath,
Should be the way called death?
Were this the way for me,
Master, how would it be?

How if the way I seek
With footsteps weary and weak,
Scarcely able to move,
Should be the way called love?
Were this the way for me,
Master, how would it be?

How if the way I desire
Should lie through the heart of the fire,
And glowing bonds amain
Clasped me in utter pain?
  Were this the way for me,
  Master, how would it be?

I know not, dear my Lord;
Humbly I wait Thy word;
Through, death, love, pain, I need
  Only Thy hand to lead;
  And the one true way for me,
  Master, is trusting Thee.

AT THE NEW YEAR.

ITHERTO, O Love, Thy gracious hand has led;
(Love or God, which name we call Thee matters nought,)
Here we praise Thee for the work which Thou hast wrought,
Here we bless Thee for the words which Thou hast said.

Thou Who sett'st the hearts of mortal men aglow
With Thy quenchless flame of glory and light and heat,
Look upon us, kneeling lowly at Thy feet,
And the love which passeth knowledge make us know.

Upward lift our yearning vision unto Thee,
Till the utter splendour of Thy holy face
Shine through all we thought was dull and commonplace,
And we see the truth and beauty that shall be.

When we cannot warm cold hearts to Thee unkind,
When we mourn our weary feet and hands too weak,
Be our comfort—there is none Thou wilt not seek;
And our solace—there is none Thou canst not find.

That dread angel with the veil upon his face,
That dread angel Pain, with bared sword as to slay,
If he meet us when we go upon our way—
Underneath his veil there is Thy smile of grace.

For we know Thee very tender, very wise,
Not a fate that crushes, blind and hard and stark,
But the Love that holds the curtain of the dark
Till the time of dawning and the good sunrise.

As we came from Thee, to Thee again we come,
Come to Thee, with Whom is neither time nor space,
To behold Thee, in Thy beauty, face to face,
And to love Thee, O our Father and our Home.

TO THE LORD CHRIST.

SPEAK to us, Master and King, who wait but to hear Thy word;
The same that, æons ago, the awe-stricken chaos heard.

O Christ of ages past, shall the Christ of the future rise,
And Thou, as a phantom, flee, before His glorious eyes?

Shall the love-purged eyes of a world that has learned at last to see,
Look glad on a stranger Christ or on Thee and only Thee;

The same That, baby-weak, to the breast of a mother clung;
The same on Whose will and word the soul of creation hung;

The very Man Who came, those hundreds of years ago,
And died on a shameful cross, Chief martyr, and King of woe;

The very fount of delight, the source and giver of joy,
The great clear sun that shines, undimmed of the world's annoy?

Thou riches of all the poor, Thou champion of all the wronged;
Thou strengthener of feeble hearts that for justice and truth have
longed;

Thou seer of faintest right, discerner of smallest good,
We shrink not from Thee who are weak, because Thou hast
understood.

Thy terrible eyes shall burn away our coldness and sin;
Thy loveful face shall light to the heaven Thy children win:

The heaven which is God; for Thou said'st, O Thou the
Faithful and True,
That he who hath seen the Son, he hath seen the Father too.

Translations

from the

First English.

THE BATTLE OF MALDON.

HE gave the word that every man should let his good steed go,
Should drive him far away and march afoot to meet the foe,
And hand to hand should strive the strife, and valiant heart should know.

The son of Offa knew the earl would brook no coward blood;
He loosed his hawk and let him fly, the dear hawk, toward the wood.
Out stept the young man to the fight, and well it might be seen
No weakling would he prove him there, as he gript his weapons keen.

And fain was Eadric by his Lord to stand in fight that day;
By his prince's side, and forth he bore his spear unto the fray;
Stout heart he had while he could hold the shield and good broadsword;
He made his vaunting true, in van of battle by his lord.

Then Byrhtnoth gan array his men; he rode and gave the rede,
He shewed the fighters how to stand and keep the place at need,
Fast with their hands to hold the shields, nor be afraid indeed.

Then, when that host of his was set in order fair and due,
He 'lighted where it pleased him best, where his own true-men
he knew.

The vikings' herald stood on shore, and threateningly and loud
He gave the earl upon the bank the seafolk's message proud.
"The swift seamèn have sent me here, and bid me say to thee
Full quickly must thou send them rings, in safety wouldst thou be;
And better 'tis for you buy off this onset of the spear
With tribute, than that we should deal so sore a combat here:
We need not spill each other's lives if ye make fast aright
A peace with us; if thou agree, thou, here the most of might,
Thy folk to ransom, and to give the seamen what shall be
Right in their eyes, and take our peace, make peace with told
monèy,
We'll haste to ship, we'll keep that peace, and go upon the sea."

Then Byrhtnoth spake, he raised his shield, he shook the slender
spear,
Angry and steadfast spake in words, and made him thus answèr:
"Dost hear, thou dweller on the sea, what this my people saith?
Their tribute is the spear, the sword, the arrow tipt with death;
War-harness that for you in fight full little profiteth.

"Now, herald of the sea-folk, take this message back, and say
Thou bearest them an ill tiding, an evil word to-day;
Say that amid his host an earl undaunted here doth stand
For his own soil, his prince's earth, the people, and the land.

In battle must the heathen fall; too shameful in my thought,
Ye went with tribute forth from us unto your ships unfought,
Now ye are hither come so far into our land unsought.
And think ye not so lightly ye shall treasure win this day,
For sword and blade shall us atone ere we will tribute pay."

Then did he bid them bear the shield; he bad the men a-rank
March on, till all were standing there, upon the river bank.

Now host might not with host contend, the tide was at its height;
After the ebb came flowing flood, the lake-streams linked their might:
Too long it seemed to wait until the spears might clash in fight.

Then Pantës stream they did beset with all their strong array,
The forefront of the East Saxòns, and the sea-folk's host that day.
No one could hurt another there, save by the arrow's flight.
The flood went out, the seamen stood all eager for the fight.
Then did the Shelter of Heroes give the word the bridge to hold
To Wulfstan, him to war inured, by race a warrior bold,
(He was the son of Ceola), and his ready spear out-leapt
To smite who, boldest of the foe, first on the bridge had stept.
With him the undaunted mighty twain, Aelfhere and Maccus were,
These from the ford not fain to flee, but steadfast-handed there,
Defended them against the foe, while weapons they might bear.

Then when the foe began to see, and know full certainly
The keepers of the bridge to them right better ones would be,
Dissemble did these loathly men, begged the approach indeed,
That they might overpass the ford, their troops across might lead—
Too much the earl in his disdain to that ill folk gave heed.

Then gan the son of Byrhthelm call across the cold water
(The warriors hearkened while he spake), "Now is your way made clear;
Come straightway on to us. Advance, men, to the fight" (he said),
"God only knoweth which of us shall keep the battle-stead."

The wolves of slaughter strode along, nor for the water cared,
The host of vikings westward there across the Pantë fared;
O'er the clear water bare their shields, their bucklers to the land,
Where, ready for the foe's coming, with his men did Byrhtnoth stand.

He bad with shields the war-hedge make, to keep them 'gainst the foe;
The glory of battle, the fight was nigh, now must the doomed lie low.
Then rose a cry as round and round the ravens wheeled in air,
The erne, all greedy for his prey; a mighty din was there.

Then from their hands the file-sharp lance, the keen-ground spear, they sent,
The shield received the dart's onset, the bows full busy went.
Oh, bitter was the battle rush, the rush of war that day;
Then fell the men; on either hand the gallant young men lay.
Then Wulfmaer took the wound of death, the battle-bed he won;
Full sorely pierced and hewn with swords was Byrhtnoth's sister's son.

The vikings had their due; I have heard that Eadward mightily
With his good sword slew one of them, nor from its swing stayed he,
So that the doomèd warrior fell down straightway at his feet;
His prince gave him, his chamber-thane, thanks when the time was meet.

Fast stood the strong-souled youths in fight, full eager in the strife,
Who first with weapon-point should take the doomed foemen's life.
Then slaughter was upon the earth: they stood all steadfastly,
And Byrhtnoth set them in array, and every thought bad he
Of every youth be set on war, who would the victory.

Then one in battle rage went forth, aloft he reared his shield,
His covert buckler, striding there against our chief in field:
So went the earl full resolute against the churlish foe;
Each all intent on others ill, to work him bale and woe.

The seaman sent a southern dart, it struck the chief amain,
He thrust with shield and shivered it: back sprang that spear again.
Then raged the fighter, with his dart that viking proud pierced he,
That gave the wound; he pierced his neck with javelin skilfully,
He guided well his hand that so might death the scather see.

Then swift he thrust another one, through shattered corslet prest
The spear that bare the mortal wound, the death-stroke through the breast.
The blither was the earl for that, out laughed the warrior grim,
Thanked God because of that day's work, which God had given him.

Then from his hand one sent a dart, from his grasp to fly amain,
That all too quickly did it pierce Æthelred's noble thane.
Beside him stood a lad ungrown, a boy i' the field; no fear
He knew, but from his lord's body drew forth the bloody spear.
'Twas Wulfstan's son, the young Wulfmaer; that sharp spear on its way
He sent a-travelling back again to pierce that foe in fray
Who erst had sorely hit his lord, that on the ground he lay.

Then went an armed man to the earl, his jewels would he claim,
The warrior's garments and his rings, and fretted sword of fame;
Then Byrhtnoth drew a sword from sheath, broad, brown of edge and hard,
And smote upon his corslet so to deal him his reward:
Too soon a seaman hindered him; that good arm's strength he marred.
He let it drop and fall to ground, his sword with hilt of gold,
He could not wield the weapon more, the keen-edged falchion hold.

Yet spake the word that warrior hoar, the young men's hearts he cheered,
Bad the good comrades forward go, nor ever be afeard:
No longer could he firmly stand on 's feet; to heaven looked he—
"Thanks, Lord of hosts, for these world-joys Thou here didst give to me;
Now merciful Creator, now, I stand in deepest need
That Thou should'st grant my spirit good, that thus my soul indeed
Fare forth to Thee, travel with peace, O King of Angels, so;
I pray Thee that the hell-spoilers nor work her hurt nor woe."

The heathen varlets smote him down, and those that stood
him by,
Ælfnoth and Wulfmaer, by the side of him in death did lie.

Then those who loved not there to be did turn them from the
fight;
The three, the sons of Odda, they were foremost in the flight.
'Twas Godric from the battle fled, forsook that noble one
Who gave him many a goodly steed full oft; he leapt upon
The horse in's trappings which his lord had owned: it was not
right;
And both his brethren ran with him, they cared not for the fight,
Godrinc and Godwig turned away from battle-rush and strife,
Fled to the shelter of the wood, to the fastness, for their life;
And with them more than had behoved if these had thought upon
The gifts and goods so free bestowed by him, their mighty one.
E'en so the words that Offa spake to them upon a day
When in the council-hall they talked about the fight and fray,
How many a one did speak the word who would not do the deed,
And many valiant in the tongue would fail in time of need.

Now fallen was the people's prince, Æthelraed's earl that day,
And all his own hearth-comrades saw that low their leader lay.
Then went there forth proud thanes, brave men; they hasted
eagerly,
One of two things their hearts' desire—to avenge their lord or die.

So Ælfric's son well heartened them, a warrior young in years,
Ælfwine spake, his words rang out in courage on their ears:

"Remember when we drank the mead, when at the board we reared
The boast aloft, heroes in all, o' the sharp fight unafeard.
Now be it proven who is brave; mine own good blood I'll shew;
Among the Mercian folk I come of lofty strain, I know;
The wise chief, Ealhhelm, strong and rich, my father's sire was he;
Thanes in that land shall twit me not that I go home to see
My own country now that my prince here lieth slain with sword—
Oh, ill of ills to me!—he was my kinsman and my lord."

Then went he forth, on vengeance bent; his weapon quickly found
A seaman there amid the host, and smote him to the ground.
He heartened well the men for fray, each gallant friend and fere—

Then Offa lifted up his voice, he shook the ashwood spear—
"Lo Æelfwine, thou hast made strong our hearts in this our need;
Now that our prince lies low o' the earth, behoves us all indeed
That each make strong his fellow's heart while spear and sword we wield,
For Godric, Odda's coward son, hath played us false in field:
Full many a man, because of him, deemed, as he rode on steed,
As on the prideful horse he rode, it was our lord indeed;
Therefore the folk was scattered sore, the shieldburg broke in flight—
A curse upon his dastard deed that put our men to flight!"

Then Leofsunu, he spake, aloft he held his buckler there,
He raised his linden-shield on high, and made him thus answèr—
"I swear to thee I will not hence with ready foot in flight,
But will go on and will avenge my friend-lord in the fight:
Nor need the steadfast ones who dwell at Sturmere twit me then
That, now my friend has fallen in fight, I homeward fare again,
Go, lordless, from the fight; but I shall weapons take to me,
The iron sword and spear." Then lo, he went forth eagerly,
His heart despised the thought of flight, and stubborn-souled fought he.

Then Dunnere spake; he shook his lance; he called with mighty breath,
The old man, upon every one to avenge his leader's death.
"He must not pause, nor for his life have any care," he spoke,
"Who thinketh to avenge his lord upon the heathen folk."

Forth went they, Byrhtnoth's body-men, no care for life had they,
Then gan they stark and strong to fight, those spearmen in the fray:
They lifted up a prayer to God that vengeance they might know
For their friend-lord, avenge him well, work death upon the foe.

It was the hostage then began to help them willingly;
Among the good Northumbrian folk of gallant kin came he:
Eeglaf, his sire, Æseferth his name, he stayed not from the fight,
The game of war, but sent abroad full many a shaft in flight.
Now would his wounding smite a man, now would he strike a shield;
From time to time he dealt a wound, while weapons he might wield.

Edward the Long stood yet in front; ready and keen was he;
He spake in words of gallant vaunt, that never a foot he'd flee,
Nor turn his back while's Better there upon the ground lay low:—
He brake the wall of shields, he fought against the heathen foe,
Till worthy vengeance he had wreaked on the viking host that day,
For his lord, his giver of gold, ere yet upon the earth he lay.

So Ætheric, noble fere, likewise, full ready forth to go,
All stoutly Sigebyrht's brother fought, and many a man also.
Oh, keenly fought those fighters there; they clave the hollow shield;
The shield-edge brake, the corslet sang a war-song in the field.

Then in the fray did Offa smite the seaman that he died;
And there to Offa, Gadde's son, himself, did death betide:
Full soon he lay, forwounded sore, but well had kept his word,
His vaunt unto his giver of gold, his promise to his lord,
That both should safe come home and ride within the city wall
Or die i' the midst of foemen's host, i' the place of slaughter fall.
Thanelike he lay beside his prince. Then were the shields brokèn,
Then, fierce with battle-rage and heat, they went those grim seamen;
Full often times the spear did pierce the doomed man's body then.

Then forth went Wigstan, Thurstan's son, against those men he fought;
He was the slayer of three of them, ere's battle-bed he sought.

'Twas a fell meeting there that day; in fight fast stood the men;
Wearied with wounds the warriors sank; on earth was slaughter then.
And all the while those warriors twain, Oswold and Ealdwold, they
Heartened the men, begged dear kin that these, at need; that day,
Should stand, endure, and use the sword, strong-handed in the fray.

Then Byrhtwold spake, that comrade old, he raised the shield on high,
He shook the ashwood spear, he taught the men unfearingly:
"The braver must our spirit be, our hearts the stronger far,
The greater must our courage wax, the fewer that we are.
Here lies our prince all pierced and hewn, the good one in the clay;
Aye may he mourn who thinketh now to leave this battle-play.
I am old in life, I will not hence, I think to lay me here
The rather by my chieftain's side, a man so lief and dear."

So did the son of Æthelgar make bold the men in heart;
Full oft did Godric send the spear a-flying, the deadly dart,
Among the vikings, even as first amid the folk went he,
And hewed and felled till in the fight he lay full low to see;
'Twas not that Godric who had turned his back upon the fight

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FROM THE EPIC FRAGMENT, JUDITH.

HE Prince of glory gave her the shield of His hand in the place
Where she stood in her uttermost need of the highest Doomer's grace
To save her in peril extreme; and the Ruler of all things made,
The glorious Father in heaven, He granted the prayer she prayed,
And, because of the might of her faith, He gave her His help and his aid.

I have heard how his word went forth, how Holofernes bad
His men to the drinking of wine, and the splendid feast he had;
The prince, he called his thanes and the shielded warriors best,
And the folk-leaders came to the mighty, all fain for the doing his hest.
And now, since the coming of Judith, three days and three nights had been,
The woman wise in her heart, and fair as the elf-folk sheen.

They went proud-souled to the banquet, to drink of the wine out-poured
The bold shield-bearing warriors, ill fellows of that ill lord.

Oh, free along the benches, the deep bowls then they bore,
And the well-filled cups and pitchers, to the sitters along the floor.
And the death-doomed men, they took them, the strong war-shield bearers,
But thereof the leader knew not, that dreadsome lord of theirs.

And the prince, yea, Holofernes, the giver of gold to men,
With the mirth of the wine's out-pouring was merry even then;
He laughed right noisy laughter, and loud was the din of his cheer,
And the stormy mirth that moved him afar could men-folk hear;
And the wanton one yelled in his glee, and his brain with the mead was wrought,
And he called to the benchmen oft to quit them as warriors ought.
With wine he made them drunk, he plied them with wine all day,
Till, drained of the might of men, like the stricken of death they lay.

And so did the prince command to serve the feasters then,
Till the day was past and o'er and the dark night neared to men.

Then he, that blending of evils, commanded her to be brought,
The blest among women-folk, to his bed with gold-work wrought.
They do the prince's hest, and forth to the guest-hall fare,
As the shield-bearers' chieftain bad, and Judith, the wise-heart, was there.

And they led that lady bright to the tent wherein alway
The mighty Holofernes, Christ's foe, in his resting, lay.
A golden fly-net fair was hung round the folk-leader's bed,
That the baleful one might look on any who there should tread,
And none upon him might look, unless that it were, indeed,
His will the strong in war drew nigh for the taking of rede.

They brought to his bed with speed the wise lady; the dark-souled went
To tell their lord they had fetched that holy one to his tent:
And the famous one joyed in his heart, and the ruler of cities was fain,
For he deemed of the lady to smirch her, that bright one, with foulness and stain.
Not so would the glorious Doomer, not so would he suffer it be,
The Warder of glory bestirred Him, the Ruler of victory.

Then the wanton child of the devil took, baleful, his bedward way,
Where glory and life should he lose, before the breaking of day.
He had well abode on earth his bitter ending then,
Such end as himself had wrought him, the stiff-souled leader of men,
While yet in this world he tarried, beneath the sun and the rain.

Then the mighty one fell on the bedmdst, and drunken with wine was the king,
And reft of his understanding, and knowing not anything:
And forth from the chief's pavilion the wine-sated warriors sped,
The last time e'er they should lead him, the breaker of troth they had led,
The scourge of the seed of the chosen, to visit his rest and his bed.

Then brave was the handmaid of God, and rede in her heart did she take,
How best might she reave him of life, or ere the impure should awake.
Then the lady with braided hair, the handmaid of the Lord,
Her right hand drew from the sheath the keen-edged glittering sword,
And she named heaven's Keeper's name, the Saviour of all, in this word.

"O God of all created, I pray my prayer to Thee!
O Spirit of comfort! Son Almighty! I bow my knee,
For Thy mercy to me who need Thee, most glorious Trinity!
Now is my heart waxed hot, exceeding hot in me,
And my soul afflicted sore and sorrowful grievously.
Give victory, Prince of Heaven, to me, and steadfast faith,
That so with this sword I slay this dealer of wrong and death.
Oh, grant me Thy salvation, most mighty Folk-prince, Thou,
For ne'er have I needed Thy mercy with greater need than now.
Avenge, O mighty Lord, the thing whereof I wot,
Which is anger in my soul, and in my breast burns hot."

Then the Judge most High, He gave her the courage she prayed Him for,
As yet to each He giveth, who seeketh Him, as of yore,
With faith and understanding, His help for evermore.

Enlarged was the woman's soul, the holy one's hope sprang new,
And she took the heathen fast by the hair of his head, and drew
With her two hands toward her there, and greatly shamed him so,—
The accursed to overcome, to lay the baleful low.
The lady with braided locks, she struck with the hostile sword,
And she cut his neck atwain, that fierce-souled foe abhorred,
And he lay as though in a swound, deep-drunken and sore-woundèd :—
Nor yet was he reft of life, nor yet was that ill one dead ;
Then strongly that lady brave, she smote with her hand once more,
And the head of the heathen dog, it rolled from him on the floor;
Dead lay the body foul; the ghost went otherwhere,
Beneath the dark of earth, to meet its damning there,
To wear the torment-bonds, by serpents wreathen round,
Held captive in burning hell, in pain for ever bound.
Nor hope can come to him, in the darkness closed and pent,
That ever he thence go forth, from the place of punishment;
But there must he dree his weird, in the dark of the serpent's lair;
Bereft of the joys of hope, he bideth for ever there.

THE DREAM OF THE HOLY ROOD.

FROM THE ENGLISH OF CYNEWULF.

LO, I will tell of the best of dreams, which I dreamed at deep midnight,
When men were lying at rest. Meseemed I saw the blessed Tree,
The loveliest Tree, the Tree most good, uplift and girt with light,
And flooded with gold; and precious gems at its foot were fair to see,
And five bright stones on the shoulder-span shone out full gloriously.

All the fair angels of the Lord gazing beheld it there;
'Twas not the rood of the sin-steeped man, the cross of the ill-doer,
But holy spirits looked thereon, and men of mortal breath,
And all this mighty universe; and the Rood of victory
Was blessed, and I was deep-defiled, sin-wounded unto death.
Bedecked with royal weeds I saw it shine full splendidly,
And jewels of uncounted cost blazed on that wondrous Tree.

Yet, through the sheen of gold I saw the mourners' bitter woe;
The blood oozed out on the right first for the strife of long ago;
Stricken and smitten with grief was I, afraid for that lovely sight;
I saw the beacon set up on high, rich-robed in royal blee,
Anon all wet, defiled with blood, anon with gold most bright;
Yet still I lay, and grieving sore beheld the Healer's Tree,
Until I heard it speak with words, that Rood most good to see.

"It was long ago, I mind it yet, I was hewn in the heart of the wood,
I was cut away from my standing-place; the strong foes took me there,
And wrought me for a sight and show, ordained me where I stood
To lift their evil-doers up, their law-breakers to bear.

They bare me on their shoulders strong, upon an hill they set,
And made me fast, a many foes;
Then saw I mankind's Lord
With mighty courage hasten Him to mount on me and yet,
Though all earth shook, I durst not bend or break without His word:
Firm must I stand, nor fall and crush the gazing foes abhorred.

Then the young Hero made Him dight; the mighty God was He;
Steadfast and very stout of heart mounted the shameful tree.
Strong-souled, in sight of many there when man He fain would free.
I trembled sore when He clasped me round, yet durst not bow or bend;
I must not fall upon the earth, but stand fast to the end.

A rood I stood, and lifted up the great King, Lord of Heaven;
I durst not stoop; they pierced me through with dark nails sharply driven;
The wounds are plain to see here yet, the open wounds that yawn,
Yet nothing nowise durst I do of scathe to any one.
They put us both to shame, us twain; I was bedrenched in blood
Shed from the spear-torn heart of Him, when His soul was gone to God.

Oh, dreadful things I saw befall upon the mount that day;
I saw the mighty God of Hosts stretched out in dreadful wise;
The darkness veiled its Maker's corpse with clouds; the shades did weigh
The bright light down with evil weight, all wan beneath the skies.

Then did the whole creation weep, and the King's death bemoan;
Christ was upon the rood.
But yet, unto the Royal One,
Came strong ones from afar; I saw; afflicted sore was I,
Yet bowed me to their faithful hands, humbly with courage high.

They lifted up the Almighty God after that torment dread;
They left me standing drenched with gore, with arrows sore wounded;
They laid down the limb-weary One and stood about His head;
Gazed on Heaven's Lord, Who, weary now, after that mighty fight,
Rested Him there a little while; then, in the murderers' sight,
The men began to make His tomb, of white stone carved it fair,
And laid the Lord of Victory within the sepulchre.

Then sang they sorrow-songs for Him, mourners at eventide,
When, weary, they were fain to go from the great Prince's side;
There did the mighty Lord of Hosts with never a host abide.

Yet for a space they stood there still, weeping full bitterly;
The sound of the warriors' voice went up: chill waxed that fair Body;
Then did they fell us to the earth; oh, awsome fate to dree!
In the deep pit they sunk us down; yet the Lord's servants, they
His friends, did hear of me and seek and find me on a day,
And decked with silver and with gold, in beautiful array.

Now may'st thou hear the tale, O man; O lief and dear, the tale
Of that sore sorrow I have borne, sore sorrow and bitter bale.
But the time is come that, far and wide, they honour me alway,
Men, and the whole great universe, and at this beacon pray.
On me God's Son His anguish took, so, glorious, towering free,
I stand 'neath heaven and heal who know the sacred awe of me.
Once I was sorest pine and shame, sharpest and bitterest then,
Ere I had opened life's true way unto the sons of men."

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